

Theology vol 60.
A N
A T T E M P T

TO PROVE, THAT
SAVING FAITH,
Is more than a
BARE ASSENT, to Gospel Truth.

In a Letter to a Friend.

WITH
Another LETTER on *Reconciliation*.

To which is added,

A LETTER
AGAINST
SANDIMANIAN Opinions.

By ONE who has tasted, that the LORD is
GRACIOUS.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE
HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF THE
NAVY
WASHINGTON
D. C.

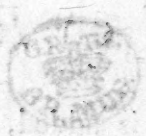
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AN ATTEMPT to prove, That *Saving Faith* is more than a *bare Assent* to Gospel Truth.

In a Letter to a Friend, &c.

Dear Sir,

I AM sorry to hear, That Mr. S——'s Notions are advanced at *W——*; and at *N——*, by Mr. N——. —I think, Sir, Mr. N——'s Letters, which you sent for my Perusal, are far from answering your Arguments.—It don't appear that He has an Experience of what *saving Faith* is: in that He says, "It is *only* an Assent to the Truth." —*Assent to the Truth*, is an Act of the Understanding *only*, upon hearing the *Report* of it. Whereas *Saving Faith*, is believing with *all the Heart*. As *Philip* said to the *Eunuch*: "If thou believest with *all thine Heart*." That is, with *all the Powers of the Soul*. There is a natural Power of crediting, or believing *any Report*, that is well *attested*, in all Men. And there is a natural Power of crediting the *Gospel Report*, "That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners:" in all Men under the Gospel Dispensation. And Thousands believe this, by a bare Assent of the natural Understanding, as it is a Proposition: and yet are utterly destitute of *saving Faith*. Yea, "The Devils believe it; and tremble."—But there must be a supernatural Power given, unto every one that believes this Proposition, in its supernatural Design, unto eternal Salvation. And that is, a supernatural Principle of *saving Faith*, wrought by the regenerating Work of the Holy Ghost in the Heart. For to all *natural Men*, notwithstanding their natural Assent to the Gospel Proposition, the supernatural Glory of it, is *hidden*. "We know, (saith the Apostle *John*) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Under-

standing, that we may know Him that is true." That is, not a new *Faculty* in the Soul; but a new Power of supernatural *Faith*, in that Faculty. And thus the Apostle Paul, "But God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath *shined* (i. e. by a new-creating Light) in our *Hearts*, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the *Glory of God*, in the Face of *Jesus Christ*."—Now all natural Men are *Darkness*: and see nothing of the *Glory* of the Truth, as it is in *JESUS*: notwithstanding their natural Assent to it, according to their natural Notion of it: yea, tho' it is extended so far, as that Jesus is a Saviour, not only from the Darkness of *Heathenism*, but also from the *Wrath to come*. For notwithstanding their Assent to the Truth that Christ is the *Saviour*, that He dy'd for Sinners, to save them from Hell: they see nothing of his Glory, as the *only*, and *all-sufficient* Saviour; but still think, they must do somewhat themselves, to make them acceptable: and thus they presume, in the great Work of Salvation, to make themselves Co-partners with Him.—But a spiritual Man, who is made *Light in the Lord*; in his spiritual Assent to the Truth, in the discerned Glory and Excellency of it; finds it very different, from that natural Assent to it, according to his natural Notion of it, which he had in his unregenerate State.—The Spirit's Illumination, is either *common*, or *special* and *saving*. Common Illumination, is sufficient for natural Assent, to the Truth of the Gospel Proposition: and with this *Faith only*, the Man will sink into everlasting Destruction. But special Illumination, is absolutely wanted, and the Soul must be blest with it, in order to that spiritual Assent to Gospel Truth, which is necessary to eternal Salvation. And when this is given, a Principle of supernatural Faith, wrought in the Heart, and Assistance for a supernatural Act of Faith afforded: Yet still, this believing with the *Heart*, by *Assent*, falls far short, of believing with *all* the Heart: it being only an Act of the Understanding. And supernatural Faith, as a Principle, has its Seat in *all the Powers of the Soul*: and Assistance is given to a spiritual Man, to act supernatural Faith, in and by, *every of his Soul's Faculties*.

Saving Faith in the *Understanding*, assents to the Truth in its eternal Veracity and infinite Goodness: credits the Gospel Report concerning Christ, in his glorious Person, as God-Man;

Man; in all his Offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; approves of him, and adores him, in his all-transcendent Glory and Excellency; and the Soul's Eye at first, is chiefly fix'd on Christ as a Priest, in the infinite All-sufficiency of his great Sacrifice: as "by his one Offering, HE hath fully satisfy'd for, and for ever made an End of Sin."—Saving Faith in the *Will*, chuses Christ, for the Soul's Saviour, and HIM alone: and comes unto HIM, for the Whole of his Salvation. As on the contrary, our Lord said to the unbelieving *Jews*, "Ye will not come unto ME, that ye might have Life." So of those who should believe on him, HE says, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto ME. That is, come willingly: for the Father's Promise to him is, "Thy People shall be willing (*Willingnesses*, Volunteers, in their Coming unto Christ) in the Day of thy Power."—Saving Faith in the *Conscience*, reveres Christ, in his great attoning Sacrifice: and thence derives all its Peace. For Believers "Have their *Hearts* (their *Consciences*) sprinkled (with the Blood of Jesus) from an evil (accusing, condemning) Conscience."—And Saving Faith in the *Affections*, embraces Christ, and desires HIM above all Things, for the Soul's satisfying Portion: clasps about him, and rejoiceth in him, as the SUM of the Soul's spiritual, and eternal Felicity. And in Love to HIM, hates every Thing that dishonours and displeaseth him; even every contrary, to his infinite Purity, Joy and Glory. For saving Faith, works by Love to its glorious Object, in every of the Soul's Faculties, so far as it is in Exercise.—Saving Faith, is all *that*, to a regenerate Soul, that the *Senses*, and *Members* are to a natural Body. It is an Eye, to see JESUS: an Ear, to hear his Voice: a Taste, to relish his ineffable Sweetness: a Smell, to delight in the Savour of his precious Name: and a Feeling, to receive spiritual Impressions from HIM: an Hand, to receive Christ: a Foot, to come unto HIM, and unto GOD by him; and to walk in him. Thus saving Faith, has its Seat in, and is acted by, all the Powers of the Soul: or thus we "believe, with all the Heart, to the saving of the Soul."—How short then, must be that Description of saving Faith, "That it is only an Assent to the Truth!" Gospel Truth, has in it, not only an eternal Veracity, but Goodness of Immensity! To-wards

wards each of which, saving Faith acts, in all the Soul's Faculties.

And Mr. N——, Sir, hath little Reason to say, “ That if Faith is any thing *more* than an Assent: it must be a *Work*.”—For *that Assent* He speaks of, is as *much a Work*; as any other *Act* of Faith. It being the Soul's *Work*, by the *Act* of its Understanding.—And indeed, all *Acts of Faith*, are no other, than the *Workings of the Heart*, towards its glorious *Objects*: or the *Workings of the Soul*, towards CHRIST, in all its renewed *Faculties*.—And yet *Faith*, and *Works*, are diametrically *opposite*, in the Point of Salvation. No Salvation, without a perfect Righteousness: Faith *works not at all*, in the Point of justifying Righteousness; but only *receives* the Redeemer's Righteousness. The *Act* of Faith, is not performed, to be the *Matter* of the Soul's Righteousness; nor is it imputed to us of God, as *such*: but only that *perfect Righteousness*, which Faith *receives*, is imputed to us, for justifying Righteousness. And so Faith, is not considered, as a *working* Hand, but merely as a *receiving* Hand, in the Point of Righteousness, unto Justification: while in its Principle it is God's Gift, and likewise in the Assistance afforded for the *Act*.—But those who work to make themselves righteous, or perform what they call *Good Works*, to be the *Matter* of their justifying Righteousness before God: seek Justification and Salvation, in such a Way, where they can never be had.

To say, Sir, “ That Faith is a Work of God, wherein the Soul is passive:” can be no otherwise true, than as it respects the given Principle of Faith, by the New-Creation Work of the Spirit, when HE regenerates the Heart: in which Work, the Soul is wholly passive.—But it is not the *Principle*, but the *Act* of Faith, in Submission to, and Reception of, the Saviour's Righteousness, for the Soul's justifying Dress; in which alone it desires to be found before a God of infinite Holiness: which is *that justifying Faith*, the Scriptures speak of. And in this, under Divine Influence, the Soul is so far from being *passive*; that it is entirely *active*.—Nor need we fear to assert, *The Soul's Activity* herein: lest any should say, “ That an *Act of Gospel Faith*, is a *Legal Work*.”

Work." For that can never be proved, until those who speak thus, can make it appear, That the Soul *performs* an Act of Faith, that *that Act*, should be the *Matter* of its justifying Righteousness: and that God *imputes* the Soul's *Act of Faith*, for its Righteousness.

That the Soul is *active*, in receiving Christ's Righteousness, as the Father's free Gift, is evident, in that we are said to "*Receive* Abundance of Grace, and of the *Gift of Righteousness*." This we may further see, from, "*Abraham believed* God: (There's the *Act of Faith*) and it was counted unto Him for Righteousness." And what is the *It*, here, that was imputed unto *Abraham*, for Righteousness? Not the *Act of Abraham's Faith*: but the *Righteousness of Christ*, which his Faith apprehended. As is clear, from what follows, "Now it was not written for his Sake alone, that it was imputed to Him: but for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we *believe* on HIM that raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead: who was delivered for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification." The same *It*, that was imputed unto *Abraham* for Righteousness: shall be imputed unto *Us*. Now it is not the *Act of Abraham's Faith*, that shall be imputed unto *Us*: and therefore it was not the *Act of his Faith*, that was imputed unto *Him*, for Righteousness. —And what it is, that was imputed unto *Him*, and is imputed unto *Us*, appears to be, the *complete Obedience of Jesus Christ*: in that HE is here said to be, "Delivered for our Offences: (i. e. Delivered unto *Death*, for our Sins) and was raised again for our Justification." —The Death of Christ is here mention'd, as that which was the Completion of his great Obedience. The *active* Obedience of our Lord's Life, is that which makes us *positively* righteous: to answer the Law's Requirements. —And his *passive* Obedience, or his Obedience unto Death, makes us *negatively* righteous: and fully answers all the Law's Penalties. We are justify'd by his active Obedience, as such that in HIM, are positively, perfectly righteous, in a Law-Sense; or according to its strictest Commands and Requirements. And we are justify'd by his passive Obedience, by his Blood, from all the Law's charges, and Curses; these having been borne for us, by Christ

Christ in our Room; and thus we have a negative Righteousness in HIM: such a Righteousness, that every Way satisfies Law and Justice.—And by both these Parts, of our Lord's one Obedience; we are made Spotless, and All-glorious, in perfect Righteousness: before a GOD of infinite Holiness! Yea, *more glorious*, in perfect Righteousness; than was the first Adam, in his Nature-Innocence, and perfect Obedience; by reason of the *transcendent Glory*, of the second Adam's Person, as God-Man; and his great Obedience for us. In which the Glories of the GODHEAD shine with luminous Rays: while his Name is, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!"—*This*, Sir, and *this alone*, is the Matter of our Justification: and not our *Act of Faith*, either in Whole, or in Part. *This* is what our Faith receives, and rests upon; for eternal Life and Salvation. *This* is what God imputes unto us, for Righteousness.—And yet, this is not imputed without our Act of Faith. That is, the secret Imputation thereof, to the whole Body of the Elect, for whom Christ obey'd, and dy'd; is not declared to, or concerning any one Person, in the written Word, until he believes in Christ for Righteousness, unto Justification of Life. But till then, the Elect, as well as others, are under the Law's declarative Sentence of Curse unto Death.—This is plain in the Text "To whom it shall be imputed, if we believe." And you will easily see, that believing, is an Act of Faith, or the Soul's Act by Faith: upon which, Christ's Righteousness, by the Father's Grace, is imputed.—And the Resurrection of Christ, is mention'd in this Text, as that which was evidential, of his having fulfilled all Righteousness; and that the Father was satisfy'd, and well-pleased, with his great Obedience. When HE rais'd him from the Dead, and justify'd HIM, as the Head of the Church; and the whole Church in HIM, mystically, as his Body: who are justify'd thro' HIM, upon the believing, personally, and declaratively. And the Resurrection of Christ, is likewise here mention'd, as that which is a solid Ground, for our Faith in GOD: in that it was as "The God of Peace, to all that did, and should believe on Christ, HE bro't again from the Dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant."

Again, Sir, That an *Act of Faith*, is requisite, unto our Justification; we may see in those Texts, “We who are *Jews* by Nature, and not Sinners of the *Gentiles*, knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have *believed in Jesus Christ*; that we *might be justified* by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: for by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.”—It is needless to enlarge on these; the very Words plainly prove what I intend. That an *Act of Faith*, or *believing in Christ*, is requisite, unto our Justification: and that it is performed for this End.—If then, the Soul’s *Act of Faith*, for it is the Soul that acts Faith, must be called a *Legal Work*: let us not be perplex’d about it, nor frightened out of the Truth, by such mere Bugbears: since we know it to be far from the true State of the Case; and that Faith, and Works, in the Point of Justification: are as vastly different, as the opposite Points of the Compass; which can never be bro’t together, nor unite in one. And this we may observe from the above Texts, That “*Faith*, and *Works*, are there set forth as direct *Opposites*. While the Apostle says, “That a Man is *not justify’d by the Works of the Law*; but *by the Faith of Christ*.” If then they *believed*, that they *might be justified*: an *Act of Faith on Christ*: is no *Legal Work*.—And indeed, tho’ this is suggested by the Men of *Reason*: it is *against* all good Sense and Reason. If a Sinner is call’d to believe *in Christ*, for justifying Righteousness: it plainly intimates, that *in himself*, he hath no justifying Righteousness. An *Act* that goes wholly *out of Self*, and terminates in *another Object*: can never center in *Self*.—Away then with this Notion, “That an *Act of Gospel Faith*, is a *Legal Work*.”

And if natural Men will charge us with “Making true Faith a *Mystery*.” yea, sneer at us, as *Mysterious*: we may well bear it, while “Christ *believed on in the World*; is declared in the Sacred Word, to be a Part of the *Mystery of Godliness*. And such a *Mystery* it is, to those who are not blest with saving Faith: that with their brightest Reason, they can never search it out.

It is a false Suggestion, Sir, “That we set aside the Word
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of God, as the Ground of Faith."—For we assert "The Word, to be the *Foundation of Faith*." But what we deny is this, "That the Word, of *Itself*, read, or heard, is sufficient, to produce *saving Faith*."—There must be a supernatural Light, given by the Spirit, both to the Organ, and the Object, or to the Eye, of our Understanding, and to the Object, Christ, propos'd in the Word: before there can be any supernatural Act of Faith. And whoever sets aside the Necessity of *this*; denies really, if he don't verbally, the saving Work of the Holy Spirit in the Heart: and his internal, saving Revelation of Christ, who is externally revealed in the Word.—When the Holy Ghost, by a new creating Voice, says, "*Let there be Light*:" in this, or that dark Heart: instantly, "*There is Light*." And when this Light is thus given, HE sets before the Soul's new Eye its Misery and Danger as a Sinner, in the Glass of the Law which accuses, and condemns it, as a Transgressor. The Holy Ghost likewise, convinces that Soul of the Insufficiency of its own Righteousness, that it must have a better Righteousness, or perish: and HE also shews the Soul, that its own Strength, is mere Weakness, that it can do Nothing for its own Salvation. Upon which, that Soul, is remov'd from Nature's Bottom, and falls down as one utterly destitute of Righteousness and Strength, and in every Respect, of *Self-Help*. Next, the Holy Ghost, presents Christ, to the Soul's new Eye, in the Glass of the Gospel, in the All-sufficiency of his Blood and Righteousness; and in the Fulness of his Salvation-Strength, as *Mighty to save*! And then HE allures, and strongly draws the Soul, by the sweet Invitations and Promises of Grace, to believe on Christ, for Righteousness and Life; and more or less, seals up its Interest; which fills the Soul with spiritual Joy and Peace, unto Love's Complacency.—And when the Soul is thus made *sick*, sick unto *Death*: Oh, how *welcome*, is Christ to the Heart, as the only *Life-giving Physician*!—But alas, *natural Men*, *know not*, *feel not*, their deadly Sicknefs: and so have no sensible *Need*, of the only *Physician Christ*. They have indeed some Convictions of outward Acts of Sin, but see not their Heart-Uncleanness; nor the Insufficiency of

their own Strength and Righteousness: and are therefore far from being prepar'd to receive a whole Christ, unto all the Ends of the Father's Grace.—They may, so far as they see themselves *Sinners*, give a natural Assent to the Gospel Report, That Christ is the *Saviour*. But alas, it is but a *partial* View they have of their Malady: and but *partial* is their View of Christ, as the Remedy. Indeed *their* Faith of Assent, is rather a Faith of the *Head*, than of the *Heart*. At most, they believe, but with a *natural* Faith; and with a *Part* of the Heart, as their Assent, is the *natural* Understanding's Act.—But vastly different, is a *spiritual* Man's Assent, in his *spiritual* Understanding's Act: and he believes with *all* the Heart.

Mr. N—— says, Sir, “If your first Hope, Belief and Comfort, when under a Sense of Guilt, do not arise from the Knowledge, View, or Belief of what Christ has done; but from something you first feel: I think your Experience a Delusion, and your Hope unscriptural.”—But he should have distinguish'd, between Faith, in its first, and *direct* Act; and in its next, and *reflex* Act. In its *direct* Act, what Christ has done, is the Ground of Faith, of a Sinner's Hope, and Belief, that HE is the only Saviour: and so, of the Soul's Looking unto HIM alone, for the Whole of his Salvation. And with this *direct* Act of Faith, Salvation, in the Word of God, is connected.—But then, as none but those who *believe*, shall be *saved*; the Soul must see, in the Spirit's Light, that it *doth* look to Christ for Salvation; and must put forth a *reflex* Act of Faith, on the Promise given to every one that looks to Christ for Life: before it can have the comfortable *Evidence*, of its own *Interest* in Salvation. And in order to this Consolation, the Spirit applies, more or less, the Promise to the Heart, and persuades and enables the Soul, to *set to its Seal that God is true*, in the Promise given.—And in this latter Sense, tho' the Soul's Comfort arises, by way of Evidence, from what it *feels in Itself*; it is *no Delusion*: because founded upon Divine external Revelation; and the Holy Spirit's internal Application.—I suppose, Sir, that when you said, “You could have no Comfort, or Peace, from

an Assent to what Christ has done:” You intended, *that* Comfort, which arises by way of *Evidence*, as to your *own Interest*; if you did not *know* in yourself, that you look’d to Christ for Life; and *feel* his Love shed abroad in your Heart. — What Christ has done as the great *Saviour* when reveal’d by the Holy Ghost in the Heart, is the solid Ground of the Soul’s Persuasion, that there is Salvation in HIM for *Sinners*. And by this, the Holy Ghost excites, and enables the Heart, to *look to Christ alone*, for that Soul’s *own Salvation*. But notwithstanding this first Consolation, or Gleam of Hope, from what Christ has done; yea, and from the Soul’s first Act of Faith in looking unto HIM for Salvation: the Soul will want the Comfort of its *own Interest* in Salvation; until the Holy Ghost in his Light, gives the Soul to see the *Truth* of that its Act of Faith: and applies the Promise to the *Heart*, to cast out Fear, and give a prevailing, or full Degree of Persuasion. — Pardon me, Sir, that I have been much longer in what I have written, concerning saving Faith, than what I first intended: May the Lord graciously bless it! — I am, with great Respect, Dear Sir,

Your humble Servant in the Lord, &c.

A L E T.

A Letter on *Reconciliation*.

Dear Sir,

WHAT Mr. W—y's Preacher asserts, "That God is not reconciled to us in Christ: but only reconcilable, and that we must reconcile him, by our Faith and Repentance:" is contrary to the Scriptures. And this is asserted by none but those, who deny the Sufficiency of our Lord's great attoning Sacrifice.—In one of the Texts you quote, it is not said that GOD was reconciled to us: but that "*We* were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son." And in the other, "God was in Christ, reconciling the *World* unto Himself."—But where *Daniel* speaks of the Work of the *Messiah*, he mentions this, as one Part of it, "*To make Reconciliation for Iniquity.*" Which, I humbly think, intends chiefly, *That* Reconciliation which was made for our Sins, by our Lord's great Sacrifice, *among the Divine Perfections*. That as by his Death for us, HE gave an infinite Satisfaction to Divine Justice: So, by virtue of this, all GOD's Perfections harmonize. "Mercy and Truth meet together: Righteousness and Peace kiss each other."—GOD was always to his Chosen, *the God of Peace in Christ*. As on his Suretyship-Engagements in the everlasting Covenant, the Father took the Surety's Word: HE was to his Elect, *the God of Love*. And hence it is, that "*We* are said, by the Death of Christ, to be reconciled unto GOD."—But notwithstanding those secret, eternal Covenant-Transactions, when we sinned, in the first *Adam*, and became Enemies to God, and in our own Persons, "Enemies in our Minds by wicked Works:" God, as the Judge of his own Law, which we had broken; thunder'd out against us Curse, Wrath and Death; our Desert being everlasting Destruction. But when the second
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Adam, by his Death, in our Room, gave Divine Justice an infinite Satisfaction: HE thereby for us made Reconciliation, and opened a Way for our eternal Salvation.— This is fitly stiled, *Original* Reconciliation: and in this, we had no Hand. And this original Reconciliation, by the infinite Merit of Christ's Death: laid a solid Foundation, for our *actual* Reconciliation by Faith.—And therefore, when the Apostle declares, "God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them:" as this reconciling Word, was appointed of God, to be the Means of begetting Faith in us; the Apostle, for himself, and the Rest, as Ambassadors of Christ, makes this *Use*, of the *Doctrine* he had laid down, "We pray you, in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled unto God."—And yet this Exhortation, doth not in the least suppose, that there is an inherent Power in us, to reconcile ourselves. But it is given, as that which is our Duty, to be of the same Mind with God: in approving of, and consequently, resting our Souls upon, that original Reconciliation, which is declar'd in his Word, to be made alone by Christ's Blood. And in the virtue of the Saviour's Blood, by the Exhortation, God works actual Reconciliation, in the Hearts of his Chosen. For it is HE, that reconciles us, when Enemies.—And until we are actually reconciled by Faith in Christ's Death, thro' the Virtue and Influence thereof: we are under a declarative Sentence of Wrath from God.—*Original* Reconciliation, by Christ's Death, was made at once, for the whole Body of God's Elect, for whom JESUS suffered.—*Actual* Reconciliation, of particular Persons, is made at various Seasons, by the Spirit of Christ, when HE works Faith in our Hearts, and enables us to believe in the Reconciliation made by Christ's Death: and so, to be of one Mind with God, as to the Way of Salvation, by Christ's Blood. And then, "The Soul looks upon HIM whom it has pierced by its Sins, and mourns." And unto every Believer, God, in his Gospel Word, is declared to be, "The God of Peace for ever."—Yet are not our Faith and Repentance, the *Matter* of our Re-

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conciliation to God; but the Saviour's *Blood*: and these are *Fruits*, springing from that *Root*. They are no Part of the Satisfaction given for our Offences: but are wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, when HE applies Salvation to our Hearts, and enables us to exercise these Graces.— Upon which, when the Soul ceases to stand at the Law's Bar, to use any legal Pleas; and entirely appeals unto God upon the Throne of Grace, in *His Christ*: The Father declares his *Well-pleasedness with us*, who *flee unto JESUS*.—Christ our great High Priest, completed the Work of Reconciliation for our Sins, by his one Sacrifice: when HE *offered up himself unto God*, said, *It is finished*: and *gave up the Ghost*.—Upon his Resurrection, having receiv'd of the Father a full Discharge for the whole Church: HE as our great High Priest, entered into the *Holiest of all*, into the highest *Heaven*, with the Blood of his great Sacrifice. To sprinkle it before the Throne of God, to reconcile that holy Place for us: that we might stand there for ever with the highest Acceptance, in JEHOVAH's immediate Presence, before a GOD of infinite Holiness.— There HE ever sits *a Priest upon his Throne*, to plead his atoning Blood, by his Advocacy and Intercession for us; unto all Salvation-Grace.— And JESUS it is, in the Virtue and Influence of his own Blood, that reconciles us thro' his Spirit and Word, by Faith.—It is HE our great High Priest, that sprinkles his Blood upon our Consciences: the Voice of which there is, *Peace, Peace!*—And when the Father sees the Blood upon us, Justice, in the Law's Sentence, passes over us; yea, being appeased by Christ, takes in us Complacence.— And by the reconciling Blood of Christ, shall we be bro't at last, to be with HIM in Glory for ever, where HE is; and stand before our Father's Face, with the highest Acceptance: to the endless Praise of his glorious Grace, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ!

Who then, Sir, may dare to say, “ That God is not reconciled to us in Christ: but is only reconcileable, and that we must reconcile him, by our Faith and Repentance? ”

tance?" For most certainly, it is HE, that every Way, reconciles Us unto Himself by Christ. And unto Him be the sole Praise, of his reconciling Grace!—Then, Thanks be to GOD, for the Passover-Lamb, sacrific'd for us: and for HIMSELF in HIM, as the God of Peace!—That, "The Peace of GOD, which passeth all Understanding, may keep your Heart and Mind thro' Christ Jesus:" is the ardent Wish of, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble Servant, &c.

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A Letter against *Sandimanian* Opinions.

Dear Sir,

THE Contents of your last, were to me, sorrowful and awful. The Account you gave me of that Person you wrote to me of, "Having been for many Years a Champion for the Truth; but is now gone off, and advanceth such great Errors in Opposition to it:" I easily think, must be very distressing to your Mind, while you are kept. It is to me a most sorrowful Account, and exceedingly awful indeed. But, "Nevertheless, the Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth (approveth, loveth, and will keep) them that are *His*." But of others, the Apostle *John* saith, "They went out *from* us, because they were not *of* us; for if they had been of us, they would no Doubt have continued *with* us.—If that Person, Sir, never was blest with saving Grace; yet he had a common Illumination of the Holy Ghost, which enabled him to know, and preach the Truth. And tho' he might not receive it in the Love of it, so that the Truth might dwell in his Heart, yet if he denies it against the Light of his Conscience; and opposes it from sinister Ends, and for Self-Advantage: think you not, that he is guilty of the unpardonable Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Most awful it is to hear you tell, "That he says, His former Preaching was performed in the Spirit of the Devil." But, as what he formerly preached, was the Truth of God's Word; it must be performed under the Holy Ghost's common Illumination: and for him now to call *that Spirit*, by which he then preached, the *Spirit of the Devil*; what can this be less, than the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost?—Again, as he says, of all other Ministers, except those of that corrupt Sect to which he is now joined, "That they are *Antichrists*, and under a *Spirit of*

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Delusion;

Delusion; and that there are no true Churches in *London*, nor in this *Kingdom*, except that which is of his Way of Thinking: Don't it appear from hence, that he is a lost Child, a Son of Perdition? And as I am informed, "That he has made a public Recantation of his former Faith:" He now openly, hath set up himself, as an Adversary, to God's Truth, and People in the Earth. And what can be expected from this Behaviour, but that "The Stone which the Lord hath made the Head of the Corner, should fall on him, and grind him to Powder;" as one of His, and his Church's Enemies?—As to his saying, "That he never till now knew the Lord aright:" He may be very certain, that he doth not now, know him aright; because what he now asserts, is directly contrary to the Truth of his Word.—I wou'd give some Glances at the Tenets he now advances. And he says, of this erroneous Sect, of which he is,

First. "That this is the Church of *Philadelphia*."—But the Character which our Lord gives of *that* Church, is, "Thou hast a little Strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name." Whereas this Sect, have no Strength to keep, but reject the Word of the Lord, and deny Christ's Name, as an Head of Influence to the Church, to communicate to Her, of his Grace-Fulness. So that they cannot be *Philadelphians*: and may it not justly be tho't, that they will at last be found, to be of the *Synagogue of Satan*?—Again, Sir, that Person asserts,

Secondly, "That no one who is called by Grace, ought, according to the Scriptures, to be stiled *Gracious*: they having no Grace in them, more than the carnal World; but all their Grace is in Christ."—This is directly contrary to God's Word, "A gracious Woman, retaineth Honour." No Man, nor Woman, can justly be stiled *Gracious*, but those that have a Principle of *Grace*, wrought in their Hearts by the Holy Ghost, and thence, under his Influence, are enabled unto *gracious* Acts: and all that are blest with this Principle of Grace, which manifests itself by gracious Acts, we are by this Text, warranted to call *Gracious*.—And tho' it is true, and our exceeding great Privilege, "That it hath pleased the Father, that in Christ, an immense Fulness of Grace, should

should dwell for the Church :” yet that Fulness in HIM, was for *Communication*. Hence the Evangelist *John*, when he says, “And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth,”—adds, “And of his Fulness, have all *we received*, and Grace for Grace.” As in Generation, a Child receives Limb for Limb, of its Parent, and bears his Image: So in Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the Soul receives Grace for Grace, from Christ, and bears his Image; there being no Grace, that is in the Heart of Christ, but what is produced in the Heart of the Regenerate, by the New-Creation Work of the Holy Ghost. A Child in Nature, has Limb for Limb with its Father: tho’ those Limbs are but small, and far from their full Growth, to their designed perfect Stature. And thus it is, with a new-born Babe in Grace: he hath every Grace in his Heart, that is in the Heart of Christ; tho’ they are but small, and are to grow up to a Perfection of Stature, in full Conformity to his holy Image. And for this, there are continual Supplies of Grace, minister’d to that Soul, from his communicative Head Christ. This was God’s eternal Design in Predestination, “That we should be conformed to the Image of his Son.”—And no Grace, no Holiness, wrought in us here: there will be no Glory for us hereafter. Without Grace in the Heart, or Heart-Holiness, we can have no inherit Meetness, for the glorious Inheritance of the Saints in Light: we cannot *see*, i. e. *enjoy*, that Kingdom of God. For, “Without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord.” There is no Meetness, in an unholy Soul, for delightful Converse, with an infinitely Holy God. All Enjoyment arises, from that Agreeableness which there is, between the Object enjoyed, and the Subject enjoying. And as there is no similar Nature, in an unholy Man, to an Holy God: he is as unfit to see, and glorify God as such, as a blind Man is, to delight in, or commend Colours; as a Man that has lost his Taste is, to relish Delicates; as a deaf Man is, to delight in musical Sounds; as a dumb Man is, to exult in articulate Praise: yea, I’ll add, as a dead Man is, to do any of the Actions

of Life.—The Life of Grace, then, must be wrought in the Heart; or the Soul can have no Communion with God, either in Grace, or Glory: but it must remain among the spiritually Dead, and be excluded from the Living God, to a miserable Eternity!—"But unto every one of us, is *given Grace*, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ." To this End, "The Spirit of *Grace*, and of Supplications, is poured down upon us:" to work Faith in our Hearts, and every Grace; and to enable us to look by Faith unto JESUS, and to cleave unto HIM by Love, in all holy Obedience. "The Spirit of the LORD rested upon *Christ*, "as the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord: and made him of *quick* (or *living*) Understanding in the Fear (or Faith, Love, and every Grace, in perfect Obedience to, or) of the LORD." And thus the Spirit of Christ, rests upon all that are *His*, in their Measure, from his immeasurable Fulness: and makes them of *quick*, (*living, Soul-transforming*) Understanding in the Fear of the Lord; as the God of infinite Grace and Holiness.—And thus we are exhorted in the Use of all the Means of Grace, to "Cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness, in the Fear of the Lord." Now this Holiness, must respect, our *inherent* Holiness: inasmuch as it is *our* Flesh and Spirit, that are to be cleansed from remaining Filthiness; for the Holiness of *Christ*, is absolutely perfect, and cannot be perfected by us. To say, then, "That there is no Grace, or Holiness, in true Believers:" is to gain-say the Scriptures: To cast the Church, and the carnal World, upon a Level; and deny the Separation which the Lord has made, and we ought to make, between the Precious, and the Vile: To turn upside down, the great End of God in Predestination: And to precipitate the Asserters thereof, into everlasting Destruction. For most certainly, if they please themselves with a Tho't, of being saved by the Holiness of Christ, and have no Holiness in *them*, from HIM: their Life, their Soul, will be found at last among the *Unclean*; and they have no Entrance into the *Holy City*.

City, the *New Jerusalem*.—In short, Sir, that Person, by this Assertion, doth what in him lies, to destroy the Power of practieal Godliness, or a Heart, and Life-Conformity to God, and to hiss it out of the Earth. But this, neither he, nor the Powers of Darkness, with all the Tools they use, shall ever be able to accomplish.—Again, Sir, he asserts,

Thirdly, “That no one who is a Child of God, can be persuaded of their Interest in his Love.”—But how contrary is this, to what the Apostle *John* asserts, of himself, and the Saints to whom he wrote, “We have *known* and *believed* the Love which God hath to us?” And to what the Apostle *Paul* asserts, of himself and the Saints, “And Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is *shed abroad in our Hearts*, by the Holy Ghost which he hath given us?”—For I am *persuaded*, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to *separate us*, from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?—If that Person, Sir, had been truly gracious, and had ever been persuaded of his own Interest in God’s distinguishing Love; surely his Experience must shew in his Face, and bear Witness to his Conscience, That this Assertion is false. However, the Word of God gainsays it: and that’s enough to prove the Fallacy of it. Not to say, There are Thousands of Saints now on Earth, that from blest Experience can witness to this Truth, That they are persuaded of their own Interest in God’s Love.—And if God says in his Word, “I *have* loved you, saith the LORD: (the immutable God) I *have* loved thee with an everlasting Love:” and speaks this by his Spirit to the Heart; what should hinder their being *persuaded* of it? I am sure, nothing can do it, but their *Unbelief*. The very Declaration, from a God that cannot lie; calls for their Persuasion instantly. And the Spirit’s Application, excludes Hesitation, in the Moments of his Sealing: at least, fills the weakest Believers, with some comfortable Degree of Persuasion,

suasion, of their Interest in God's Love, which is the Source and Spring of the Whole of their Salvation. And not a Believer there is under Heaven, but wou'd be glad of a full Persuasion, of their Interest in the Love of God, which alone brings Salvation. — But how doth that Person, *help* the doubting Saints, by telling them, “ That they *cannot* be persuaded?” That is, that they have no *Ground* for Persuasion of their Interest in God's Love, from his written Word? Instead of helping their *Faith*; doth he not rather strengthen their *Unbelief*? And Satan-like, rob them of their Strength, to maintain the Combat against Unbelief, by fighting the good Fight of Faith? — But why doth he thus militate against the Saints Persuasion of their Interest in God's Love? Oh, here lies the Snake in the Grass; He wou'd suggest, that the Love of God is suspended, till their finisht Obedience; and they must be obedient to the End, or can have no Interest therein. — But God's Love is free, a sovereign Act of Grace, immutably fix'd upon the Persons of his Chosen in Christ, which waited not for their Obedience; but gloriously secured it, to his Praise, and their Bliss. And his Love, He will have declared to them by his Word and Spirit, and a Persuasion thereof wrought in their Hearts, more or less: to change them into his Love-Image, and excite them, in Love to HIM, unto Gospel-Obedience. Whereas that Person, militates against their Persuasion: to cast them upon working for Life, on the Legal Plan; and so doth what in him lies, to hinder their Salvation. — Again, Sir, that Person asserts,

Fourthly, “ That it is Blasphemy to affirm, That the Saints *shall* never finally fall away: for they *may*, if God withdraws from them his preserving Mercy.” — But how contrary is this, to what our Lord asserts, “ I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish: neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand? My Father, which gave them ME, is greater than all, (than all their Enemies, Men, Sin, and Devils) and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand? I and my Father, ther are One?” That is, I, as the eternal Son of God,

tho' now personally united to the human Nature, am still in my Divine Person, a Joint-Possessor of the Divine Nature, with God in the Person of my eternal Father: tho' we are Two, in Person, we are One in Essence, One in Will, One in Power, and jointly engaged for their Preservation, unto eternal Salvation? — And how contrary is that Person's Assertion, "That it is Blasphemy to say, that the Saints *shall* never finally fall from Grace:" to GOD's Declaration, concerning the Children of the second Adam, "*As is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly?*" The first Adam, and the second, were the two Heads, of all Mankind: and their respective Seeds, were to live, or die, as they obey'd, or disobey'd. The first Adam disobey'd, and all his Seed in Him: whence Death entered, upon him, and them; for they were to share the same Fate with him. But the second Adam obey'd, for all his Seed, and were obedient, even unto Death: and by his complete Obedience, HE lived, as their Head, and procured their Life; so they are to live with HIM, a Life of Grace, in Obedience, even unto their Death: and then to live with HIM, an eternal Life in Glory. Impossible then is, that the second Adam's Seed, should ever fall from Grace: Their Life, being bound up with His. And is it not Blasphemy, to say the contrary? Most surely, it is blaspheming the Truth of GOD's Sacred Word; and the Privilege of the Children of the second Adam: who by Virtue of their inseparable Union unto HIM, are to live a Life of Grace with him, unto the End; and a Life of Glory with him, to an endless Duration! For, "*As is the Heavenly, such are they also, that are Heavenly.*" And HE hath said, "*Because I live; ye shall live also.*" — And how vain is that Supposition, "That the Saints may finally fall away; if God should withdraw from them his preserving Mercy?" Since HE has engaged, "*That HE will not turn away from doing them Good: and that HE will put his Fear in their Hearts, and they shall not depart from HIM?*" "*They are kept* (as in Garrison) *by the Power of God, thro' Faith unto Salvation:*" as well as their eternal Inheritance, is reserved for them in Heaven. — But whence is this Suggestion, that the Saints

Saints may finally fall from Grace? Is it not to keep their Spirits in legal Bondage? Away with it then! It is trumped up by the infernal Powers of Darkness: and is fit to be received by none of the free Children of Promise; who are Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ!—Further, Sir, that Person asserts,

Fifthly, “That *Balaam* had Grace, as well as Gifts and yet after all was left to perish.”—Of *Balaam*’s Grace nor yet of his Gifts, as a true Prophet, the Scriptures give no Intimation: but say of him, “He was a Sorcerer: (i. e. one who by Inchantments dealt with the Devil) that he loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, and would fain have cursed *Israel*.” And tho’ the Lord in an extraordinary Way, by the Spirit of Prophecy, compelled his Mouth to pronounce a Blessing on them: this was no Evidence, that *Balaam* had Grace in his Heart, or that he wished well to them. But the contrary is manifest, by that pernicious Counsel which he gave to *Balak*, “to cast a Stumbling-Block before the Children of *Israel*, to commit Fornication, and to eat Things sacrificed to Idols.”—But what a Contradiction is this, to say of the *Saints*, “They have no inherent Grace, and of wicked *Balaam*, He had Grace?” But any Thing, tho’ ever so great a Contradiction, shall be utter’d to serve a Turn, by Men of corrupt Minds.—Once more, Sir, that Person asserts,

Sixthly, “That when any one of a Family believe the Truth; Salvation is come to that House: and that all his Household shall be saved.”—But is it not strange, that he should say of the *Saints*, “They may finally fall from Grace:” and so perish at last: and then presently assert of a Graceless Household, “They shall all be saved?” What taught him these Contraries? Was it not the Father of Lies? The *Saints* are forever secured from final Apostacy by the immutable Word of the all-faithful, and all-gracious GOD! And of all Graceless Persons, that live and die such HE that is Truth Itself, in his immutable Word hath said “He that believeth not, shall be damned.” Faith, with every other inherent Grace, is given to every one that shall be saved.

saved: and until these are given, no Man can justly say of any one, *He shall be saved*; for the Word of God contradicts it, and says, "*He that believeth not; shall be damned.*"—And the Faith, to which Salvation is annexed, is not a bare natural Assent of the Understanding to Gospel Truth: but that Faith, which operates in all the Powers of the Soul, by Love to Christ, its glorious Object. And even by *this* Faith, no one *shall be saved*, but the Person *possessing it*. No Man can be saved, by another's Faith: and to say of those who have it not, *They shall be saved*: is not only talking without Book; but directly contrary to the *Word of God*.—Mr. S——n's Opinion, "That a natural Assent to the Truth, is Gospel-Faith:" hath no Foundation, in the Gospel Revelation. This Faith, is no other than what the *Devils* have. "They believe, and tremble." They believe the Truth of the Gospel Proposition, "That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners:" and tremble at its direful Effects, which it will have upon them, for their Opposition. They believe its Truth; but not its Excellence, to excite their Esteem, and submissive Carriage: and the Truth of it, doth but irritate their Malice, to oppose it, tho' they know thereby, they shall bring upon themselves God's righteous Vengeance. They believe, by *Assent to the Truth*: but impossible it is, that they should *love*.—And those of the human Kind, that assert a bare Assent to the Truth, is that Faith which the Gospel requires: and militate against that Faith, which works by Love to it, in its Excellence, and makes it the Matter of the Soul's Choice; are the Devil's *Instruments*: and must, if they repent not, and are not blest with saving Faith, as Christ's, and the Church's Enemies, be sent away from HIM, as the Saviour, and by HIM, as the righteous Judge, accursed, with the Devil and his Angels, into *everlasting Punishment*!—I may just observe, Sir, That *Sandimanian* Opinions, suit the *natural Man*: as they feed his legal Pride, that he can save himself, by his natural Assent to the Truth; and his corrupt Appetites, as he is taught to look for no Holiness in himself.

Upon the Whole, Sir, I think the Case of that Person you wrote of, is very awful. How much better would it have been for him, not to have known the Truth: than after he knew it, and preach'd it, to deny, and oppose it! But we must leave him to God's Judgment: who as *the Judge of all the Earth*, will do *right*.—That you may be *kept from Falling*, in this shaking Time; and preserved safe by the Lord, to *his heavenly Kingdom*: is the hearty Desire of,
Dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend and Servant, &c.

F I N I S.



ERRATUM in the Letter on *Saving Faith*.

PAGE 6, Line 9, for *Objects*, read *Object*.